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ABSTRACT

The relationships that school principals experience with superintendents and school board members are often tenuous. Attempts to include principals as part of management and the results of forming a management team are described in this review. Six journal articles and four documents in the ERIC system are annotated. (MLF)

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The Best of ERIC
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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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The Management Team

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1. Boles, Harold W. "An Administrative Team?" ***Journal of Educational Administration,*** 13, 2 (October 1975), pp. 73-80. EJ 134 517.

In this report on the management team in one Michigan school district, Boles cites a situation that is all too common. His report reveals that the management team existed in name only. The term "administrative team" was being "applied to periodic meetings of individuals who were in no sense a team." While the team included principals and assistant principals, teacher requests for participation on the team were never acted on. Meetings were not convened along carefully prepared agendas, and items of interest to only a few members were often discussed in the presence of the entire committee. The word "policy" was often used to refer to things that were clearly not policy. The consideration of goals, philosophy, and curriculum was almost totally omitted.

This apparent confusion concerning areas of authority and responsibility was corroborated by Boles' testing instrument. He discovered that there was no consistency in terms of the expectations members of the team held for each other. In only one case was the individual's self-evaluation the same as the other members' evaluations of him.

Boles concludes that the team concept and the idea of management by objectives had been instituted in this case without being clearly understood. Members of this team were not receiving the necessary feedback concerning their performance, and they were unsure what behaviors to expect from others on the team. Boles recommends the use of his questionnaire to gauge performance expectations and to provide feedback.

2. "The Brewing—and, Perhaps, Still Preventable—Revolt of the School Principals." ***American School Board Journal,*** 163, 1 (January 1976), pp. 25-27. EJ 130 919. "It's Late, But There's Still Time to Give Your Principals a Real Say in Management." ***American School Board Journal,*** 163, 2 (February 1976), pp. 32-34. EJ 132 499.

This pair of related articles reports the results of a survey of American and Canadian schools. It reveals that "vast numbers of the 92,000 principals in the United States—and many of Canada's 10,000 as well—are providing ominous indications that they are perilously close to rebellion against the top management of their school districts." Of those surveyed, 86 percent were in favor of laws that "would mandate school boards to bargain formally with principals." Half of the principals reported serious problems of communication with superintendents and boards. Fully 48 percent "find themselves (regularly or occasionally) ***seriously*** at odds with their superintendents and/or school board." Roughly the same percentage felt that many of their prerogatives had been lost in the bargaining between top management and teachers.

As concerns their role in decision-making, the principals felt they were consulted only when they became disagreeable or when the situation required a scapegoat. Except in times of crisis, most principals felt they were ignored. As a remedy to this solution, 16 percent replied that they have attained a management voice through a formal role at the bargaining table. Another 30 percent claimed their voice was heard through a management team, but half of this 30 percent felt the team was either ineffective or existed in name only.

But the ***Journal*** survey reveals a more positive side as well. 59 percent of the principals were convinced that they still retained "some important controls"; 86 percent replied that they received strong support during times of real trouble (disruptions, racial violence, vandalism); 83 percent reported that their boards and superintendents were receptive to new ideas. Over two-thirds saw themselves as educational leaders rather than as shop foremen.

(continued)

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—The next issue of The Best of ERIC will appear in September.

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What will prevent the "principals from bolting into formal unionism—thereby gravely weakening, if not destroying, the concept of the school management team?" While many people feel that the issue of administrator unions has become a moot point in many districts, the fact remains that principals not only want decisive leadership but they also want to be part of it. Boards and superintendents must agree to define the authority of school principals and to allow their participation in the discussions and negotiations that lead to decisions.

3. **Coccia, Joseph A.** "Point. Principals: Not Middle Management," and **Barea, Norman.** "Counterpoint. Principals—Yes, They Are Management." ***NASSP Bulletin,*** 61, 405 (January 1977), pp. 79-84. EJ number not yet assigned.

One problem inhibiting the development of the management team is the question of the principal's role. Is the principal middle management or is the principal more properly a teacher? This is perhaps the single most important issue facing the district that wants to implement a management team.

Coccia argues that the reclassification of "principals as middle management is of recent vintage." They are considered team members only when administrators find it convenient. While Coccia acknowledges that the team feeds an instinctive need for "identity and status," the principal should be regarded as "the master teacher" and should be allowed to "be part of teacher organizations and should have representation on teacher bargaining units." Two benefits would accrue to principals in teacher unions. First, principals would want what is best for their staff, and their organizations would function better. Second, teachers might be less anxious in bargaining sessions to divest principals of their powers.

Barea argues that while many of the prerogatives principals once held are now formalized by a negotiated contract, the fact remains that the tasks enumerated in the agreement are "clearly managerial." In Michigan, for example, general school laws define the principal's duties. The principal is responsible for the operation and evaluation of educational programs. The principal advises on matters of promotion, discipline, scheduling, budgeting, and much more.

Only two courses are open to the principal, who now carries "more responsibility with less authority" than at any other time. Either the principal must be part of a management team that truly works or he must belong to a principals' organization that negotiates formally with the board. Barea sees no other alternatives. A principal who becomes part of a teaching organization risks becoming a "pawn of the faculty."

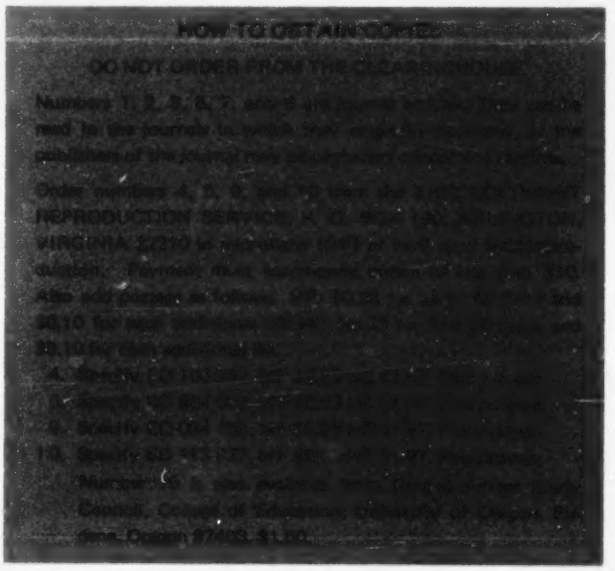
4. **Coelho, Robert J.** "Administrative Team Approach—Development and Implementation." Paper presented at the American Association of School Administrators annual meeting, Dallas, February 1975. 21 pages. ED 106 947.

Declaring that the issue facing school districts is no longer whether to change, but how to direct and control change, Coelho reports on the development of a districtwide management team in the conservative New England school district where he is superintendent. The team concept resulted from four specific goals of Coelho and two colleagues. They wanted to create self-renewing structures, to minimize permanent systems, to promote a "systems" view in all parts of the district, and to create a system that allows for full airing and handling of conflicts.

The success that Coelho reports is attributable to several factors. First, the district made use of personnel, including systems designers, from a neighboring industrial corporation and a neighboring university. These third-party consultants met initially with the superintendent and his colleagues, who were themselves taking management courses to prepare for these changes. Eventually the consultants moved toward offering a number of onsite curriculum workshops in problem-solving, leadership, communications skills, and goal-setting for principals and assistant principals. Area supervisors and other middle management personnel attended one-day sessions for 12 consecutive weeks.

The result of these sessions was the emergence of what Coelho calls "work families." Employees with common goals and problems joined together.

Besides the intensive reliance on inservice training and consultants, much of the success of the program was surely due to the willingness of the district to start its organizational reforms at the top.



5. **Erickson, Kenneth A.,** and **Rose, Robert L.** "Management Teams in Educational Administration: Ideal? Practical? Both?" Eugene: Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon. ***OSCC Bulletin,*** 17, 4 (December 1973). 24 pages. ED 084 662.

In an attempt to supply a basic introduction to the concept of management teams, Erickson and Rose ask and answer 20 questions about what teams are and how they work. The material is a distillation of seminars sponsored by the Field Training and Service Bureau of the College of Education, University of Oregon.

Erickson and Rose assert that the "idea" of the team is perhaps more important than the actual form a team might take. There is no perfect team structure for any school district, and each district should form teams to meet its own needs. One example of a flexible team model was found in San Leandro, California. When a problem arises, the management team appoints a task force of concerned persons who in turn select a chairman who gathers information and proposes solutions. The task force accepts, critiques, modifies, or rejects the solution before it goes to the original team, which can also accept, modify, or reject. The San Leandro team

has 20 members and is basically a "listening, approving, disapproving, and delegating kind of team."

Another question and answer specifically outline seven options for a superintendent who finds himself in disagreement with the recommendations of his management team. These options range from veto power to the calling in of consultants.

One advantage of team management is that it provides better decisions in a climate of higher morale. Some disadvantages are that the processes of team management require more time and a sincere effort on the part of the superintendent not to try to have all the answers.

6. Haines, Gerald. "The Management Team: Advocate for Kids." ***Thrust for Educational Leadership,*** 6, 2 (November 1976), pp. 7-9. EJ number not yet assigned.

While everyone recognizes that schools exist to provide for students, often the various needs of the staff, the organization, or the community interfere with these goals. Because school principals are often forced to react to front-burner issues, long-range planning and the goals of the organization may be neglected for the temporary issues. Only a true management team "can develop congruence between the needs of all the groups and direct them toward the common goal of student success." Under a system of team management, all groups have an area of clear authority, and everyone is a manager.

In an attempt to create a comprehensive system with the goal of developing "self-directing, self-motivating individuals" working for the common good, Pioneer High School in Whittier, California, planned and implemented a management team program over a four-year period. In 1973 the district sponsored a management workshop for board members, the central office staff, and principals. During the following two years, the high school wrote a "school achievement plan," which enumerated resources, specified goals, and generated job descriptions. A number of district workshops were sponsored, and as the plan progressed more people were involved in the process.

Haines lays the success of the plan to the fact that it was predicated on building the success and self-esteem of the subordinate. In addition, the plan was initiated at the board level.

7. McNally, Harold J. "A Matter of Trust. The Administrative Team." ***National Elementary Principal,*** 53, 1 (November-December 1973), pp. 20-25. EJ 085 992.

The old hierarchial structure of school districts is giving way to the more democratic processes of collective bargaining and consultative decision-making. Specifically, the management team is one aspect of this new democratic feeling. As McNally defines it, the management team is not an informal social group or an "inner circle" without definitive status. Nor is any body that excludes principals consistent with the true idea of the team. Rather, it is a group recognized by the board and superintendent as part of the "formal administrative structure of the school system." The team includes central office staff and middle management in the schools and makes important decisions on policy and interpretation of policy.

To make the management team work, trust and open communication are essential. The role and responsibility of each team member must be clearly spelled out. McNally points to a study of a Michigan team that revealed much confusion and "role ambiguity" on the part of team members. Each team member should participate in decisions about roles and decisions about goal-setting. The team must also be evaluated

regularly to maintain its effectiveness.

McNally does not believe that the team will necessarily make all the decisions in the district. But he does believe that its legitimate domain of concern can include the team's salary and working conditions.

8. Salmon, Paul B. "Are the Administrative Team and Collective Bargaining Compatible?" ***Compact,*** 6, 3 (June 1972), pp. 3-5. EJ 061 340.

If the idea of team administration makes sense, asks Salmon, why is there so little report of its success? He surmises that "it's easier to profess faith in the concept than to make it really work." To make the team really work requires care, complete commitment, and a superintendent who can withstand the pressure to make quick judgments without consulting his team.

Salmon recognizes that a key member of the management team will be the principal. But he recognizes also that the principal is skeptical about his status on a management team and is concerned about providing for his own welfare. Of the options open to principals, Salmon rejects the notion that principals ought to rely on the goodwill and benevolence of the board and the superintendent. But he also rejects the notion that principals ought to form bargaining units. As middle management, principals are integral to the administrative process. Principals are proposers of items to be bargained, recommenders of changes in the contract, implementers of new contracts, and reviewers of agreements under negotiation. All these responsibilities lock the principal firmly into the management team.

Salmon favors meet-and-confer negotiations and the issuance of a management manifesto that instantly legitimizes the team, recognizes its members, and defines their duties. The manifesto would acknowledge that matters of salary and benefits could be a regular agenda item for the team's discussion.

9. Schmuck, Richard A. "Development of Management Teamwork: National Overview." Paper presented at the Educational Managers Annual Academy, Wemme, Oregon, July 1974. 7 pages. ED 094 456.

Schmuck sees a paradox in modern institutional life. As life grows more complex, people become increasingly inter-

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dependent on each other. To be successful, an institution requires the collaboration of many individuals. But at the same time, individual diversity often works against collaborative interdependence. That is, employees need to speak for themselves, to feel their voices are heard concerning the issues that affect their lives. In traditional organizational structures, this human diversity and uniqueness are often squelched. But not so in team management, which in fact exploits individual talents and members' strengths to reach wise decisions. Key to the notion of the management team is that members hold "some degree of reciprocal influence over one another."

The advantages of the team are manifold. The increased input from all parts of the school district can give "an increased understanding of how the district structure works." Input from minority groups can increase the effectiveness of planning. Because collaboration in decision-making results in an "increased sense of psychological ownership in relation to managerial actions," a group decision is more likely to be fully implemented than a decision that is merely shuttled down from district headquarters.

The size of the team itself is crucial. It should be large enough to encompass representatives from all subsystems and still small enough for face-to-face discussions and collaboration. The team should typically not exceed 15 members. Large districts will have a series of teams with members on "link-pin" roles serving on the deliberations of at least two teams. Some teams are permanent, some are temporary.

The goal of team deliberations need not be 100 percent agreement. The goal is primarily that everyone understands the issue at hand, can paraphrase it, has a chance to air his or her feelings, and is at least willing not to sabotage the majority's decision.

10. Sharpe, Fenton. *Trust–Key to Successful Management.* Eugene, Oregon: Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon. *OSSC Bulletin*, 19, 2 (October 1975). 23 pages. ED 113 827.

The concept of team management is attractive because members of the team "become more vitally involved in the planning and implementing processes" than they might in some other kind of organizational decision-making process. But the greatest drawback to the effective functioning of the team is the same one inherent in every large organizaton. That drawback is the lack of trust in everyday communications and interactions.

Sharpe writes that "trust is an act of willing dependence by one person upon another or group of others." This willing dependence involves a great deal of emotional risk, however. The risk is minimized in a hierarchical organizational structure in which decisions flow from the top down. A plethora of rules and regulations further protects members from risk by clearly specifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

A refusal to share decision-making power implies that "ordinary participants in the enterprise cannot be trusted to exercise responsibility." Sharpe cites a study that reveals how a climate of mistrust affects worker and managerial attitudes. Communication becomes distorted, and there is less originality of thought, a fear of controversy, and greater emotional instability.

The responsibility for engendering trust lies with the educational leader who must learn to trust himself and others. He must be willing to delegate important decisions to other members of his team. With this increase in trust comes an increased effectiveness in problem-solving, increased emotional stability, and greater intellectual development.